



Bay

Area

Atari

Users

Group

\$2.00
USA

NEWSLETTER

November 1987

ATTENTION ! Meeting Location



Meetings: General - Monday Dec. 7th
ST Sig - Tuesday Dec. 8th
Bracher School Cafeteria
Corner of BOWERS & CHROMITE
SANTA CLARA, CA

Atari 8-bit SIG - Tuesday Dec. 15th.
Hewlett-Packard - Oak Room
Pruneridge Ave. - Cupertino

All meetings start at 7:00 PM

B.A.A.U.G. Roster of Officers:

President:

Mike R. Burnham (408) 247-0989

Vice-President:

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Doug Thompson (415) 961-0353

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Frank Nagle (408) 720-8131

Baug was founded by
John Crane & Clyde Spencer

Inside This Issue:

- o World Of Atari News
- o Product Reviews
- o Christmas Shopping ??

- o Meeting Minutes
- o Knarf's Korner
- o And Much More ...



Knarf's Korner

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Dateline: Sunnyvale, CA.

Well, we continue to try and improve on the quality of Publishing Partner for the monthly B.A.A.U.G. newsletter. A new font is being used this time, the font designed by Dan Burney. It seems that Dan didn't care for the inordinate amount of spaces that was being shown in the fonts supplied by Publishing Partner, sooo he redsigned some himself in an attempt to make things look a little more professional. He has been good enough to let us have a copy of his work, so we could experiment with it in this issue. I think we may have hit upon a winner !!! Thanks Dan for the assistance with the new fonts.

Another issue was the quality of the scanned picture at the top of my column. Although partially recognizable, it still left some things to be desired. Not being a talented artist, I was unable to really change the picture so that it looked more like the person it was to represent. Along comes MaryLou White at B&C Computervision to the rescue ONCE MORE !!! Why not have a Polaroid picture taken, and then scan the picture with the Navarrone Scanner, then create a DEGAS picture, crop it, and enter it into Publishing Partner???? Well, why not ??? So here you have the results of just that route. Of course, why not just take a picture and "cut and paste it" ? Well, having worked on a newsletter for so many years, where cutting and pasting was the norm, with the advent of Publishing Partner, I had decided that there would be little or NO cutting and pasting. Of course the ads provided by some of our advertisers still have to be cut and pasted, that is the only understandable part of the "mess", anything else was to be entered directly. So far I've been able to stick with this policy with no undue problems.

ST INFORMER REVISITED

Since the last issue where a review of this package was included from Compuserve, I've received a copy of what they refer to as their Trial Pak. It includes a fully working copy of the package, but it is restricted to a minimal number of records. If the Trial Pak is any indication of the quality of the program, WAIT !!!!

DON'T, I REPEAT, DON'T rush out and buy it. The concepts are good, the package has some nice added features, BUT, I REPEAT, BUT, it does have some leftover bugs. When displaying lists on the screen, it seems that the program sometimes doesn't realize where it is and runs into a problem with redraws. The same is true if you use the unique graphics features on a form window. When moving between records, the program forgets that it has shown something on the screen and doesn't redraw the area. This results in a very sloppy looking display.

The concept of the Trial Pak is good, but I'm sorry the package wasn't as professional as hoped for. Regent Ware may make a few dollars on the Trial Pak, but I think that others like myself will not find the offer attractive enough to go out and buy the REAL thing. Oh yes, they do offer the price of the Trial Pak off on the purchase of the full package.

BAAUG NEWS

Don't forget that elections are coming up real soon now. No, not as in "the package is being released Real Soon Now", but for real. December is designated in our by-laws as the meeting for the year for officer elections. If you, or someone you know, is interested in running for one of the positions, please let one of the current officers know. They'll be happy to include your name on the ballot for the December election. None of the positions is extremely demanding, although they all do require some of your "free time". This normally amounts to a minimum of two meetings a month, the General BAAUG meeting, and the Board Meeting. Each lasts approximately 2 to 3 hours and is held in the evening. The general meeting is the first (1st) Monday of the month, and the Board meeting is usually held the following Monday. No experience necessary. Just a willingness to help out YOUR USER GROUP.



Until Next Time:

***** Happy Atariing *****



REVIEW:

INTERLINK ST

(Communications Software)

The following is a review of Interlink ST that appeared in the October issue of ST World. It is the most complete review done to date. Permission was obtained from the publisher to reprint.

Author: Ralph Turner

Publisher: ST World October 87

Would you buy a modem, or use the one you've already got, if telecomputing could somehow be made easier? Or, if you're already an experienced modem user, are you looking for a better terminal package? If the answer to either question is yes, you'll want to read this review of Interlink ST, a recently released telecommunications program from Intersect Software Corp.

In the past, using a tel-com program could get pretty complicated, especially for a novice. First configuring your ST's parameters - baud rate, parity, mode of transfer, emulation mode, etc. - can be tedious. Especially when different called systems require different configurations.

Second, each called system has its own labyrinth of sections and special interest groups, as well as its own unique set of commands. Even after you've successfully negotiated a system a couple of times, there's no guarantee that the next time you call it up you'll remember how you did it.

INTO THIS CONFUSING ENVIRONMENT COMES INTERLINK ST

The first thing you'll notice about the program is that it has two main screens, one of which is displayed at all times. The On-Line Screen is the one you'll normally use when you are connected to the called computer. The other screen, called the Main Menu, displays a status window at the bottom and a GEM menu bar at the top, and is activated if you want to use the mouse to pull down GEM windows or access desk accessories. You'll also use this screen to check Interlink's current settings or to use the buffer, which is really a mini word processor.

You can switch back and forth between these two screens very easily. If you're keyboard oriented like I am, you press the F1 [Function Key 1] to bring up the On-Line screen, or the Undo key when you want the Main Menu Screen. I like being able to switch back and forth without having to touch the mouse. On the other

hand, if you're rodent oriented, you use the right mouse to toggle between the two screens, which is also easy.

STATUS LINE AND TYPE AHEAD BUFFER

Whenever the on-line screen is activated, you've got a choice of what you want at the bottom of the screen: either a status line or a type-ahead buffer. If you opt for the status line, the following nine pieces of information will be displayed: the amount of time you've been on-line; a time-of-day clock; a chimes active symbol; whether you're connected or not; whether you're using the recorder or not; the baud rate; the duplex setting; the percentage of buffer space remaining; and whether the buffer is on or not.

At any time, however, a press of the F9 key will replace the status line with the type-ahead buffer. This allows you to type, and store in the buffer, up to 79 characters from the keyboard (including control characters) that you can send to the other systems whenever you want. The contents of the buffer are sent whenever you press a carriage return. However, if you don't want to send the typed-ahead-message, you can return to the status line (via the F9 key) and the buffer's contents remain for future use.

This type-ahead buffer is great for chatting, or sending a file name, etc. Since you don't cut off the flow of information from the remote system by typing into the buffer, it allows you to compose messages (including the inevitable backspacing corrections) at the same time you're keeping your eye on the incoming transmission, thus saving time and the anxiety caused by on-line composition.

The remaining nine function key combinations, are used to perform other actions, either directly, or via pop-up windows which require mouse choices. If you're unsure at any time about what key to press, there's always the Help key. This will display a screen that lists all the main functions and their corresponding keys.

DIALING A NUMBER

One of Interlink's nicest features is its Auto Dialer, which automates the dialing of frequently called numbers. Before you can use the Auto Dialer, however, you've got to set it up. But even this is easy.

To set up the Auto Dialer you press the F6 key, which brings up the window displayed in Diagram 2 (Phone Dialer window). When you click on one of the twenty dialer buttons (the ten boxes to the right and left of the window), the button becomes highlighted. You can now type in the following information: the name of the BBS; its telephone number; any "LOG" responses (such as Control-C) or delays (such as 3 seconds) which the called system will need when you get connected; and any PreFix or SuFix numbers required by your long distance dialing service (such as Sprint, etc.).

The next step in the set-up procedure is to mouse-click on the RS232 button, which brings up the Set RS232 Parameters box. [see diagram 3] As in all the other menu windows, the mouse is used to press buttons which toggle different functions on or off. For instance, clicking on the "full" or "half" buttons will change the duplex setting. After your RS232 configuration is to your liking, you click on the Exit button. Once back in the Dialer Editor, you can, if you wish, click on the Style or Modem buttons to set additional parameters. [see diagram 4&5] So far, what you've done is set up the parameters and instructions for one specific system that you plan to call. If you want, you can go through the set-up procedure for the other systems, too. If you do, you'll assign them to any of the remaining 19 Dialer buttons.

Once you've set up the parameters for as many numbers as you want, you click on the save button, which writes all your choices to a file called DIAL.DAT. Set-up of the Auto Dialer is now complete. From now on, whenever you want to call one of these systems, all you do is press F6. When the dialer appears, double click on the name of the system you want. Interlink not only will dial the number automatically, but will configure the ST according to the parameters you've already set for that particular telephone number.

This makes calling different numbers a snap. Let's say you habitually call three different BBS's. One of them operates at 300 baud; another operates at 1200 baud but requires linefeeds; and a third operates at 2400 baud. With one click of the mouse, Interlink's Auto Dialer not only dials the BBS, but also sets the required parameters for that specific system. In other words, you'll never again have to change the baud, the linefeed, or any of the other many possible parameters.

ADDITIONAL DIALING FEATURES

Additionally, clicking on the Auto button will cause a number to be dialed repeatedly until a connect is established. (You can adjust how many attempts are to be made.) Clicking on the Group button, followed by choosing several dialer buttons, causes Interlink to dial the selected numbers, one after the other, until it gets a connect.

I next tried out the Execute Program function, which allows you to run another program from within Interlink. I found it particularly useful, since on occasion I've forgotten to run my SCRNSAVE program before loading Interlink. (This program blanks out my mono monitor after three minutes of inactivity). The Execute Program feature allowed me to run SCRNSAVE from within Interlink without having to exit the program and return to the desktop. Another use for this function would be to run an ARC compression program before sending a file. Note finally, that Execute Program can operate at the same time you're receiving data from the modem.

THE RECORDER AN AUTOMATIC MACRO CREATOR

The feature that impresses me the most about Interlink, however is its Recorder. Once you turn this function on (and believe me, you will turn it on) it records all the interactions between the service you've called, and Interlink, as well as recording your mouse movements and selections.

Once you've made a recording, you can play it back anytime you want, and Interlink will automatically go through the steps and interactions that are stored in the recording. Let's say I want to call a particular BBS and check for messages. First, I press Alt-R, which turns on the Recorder. Then I proceed to go through all the steps required by that BBS: I dial it's number, give my password when prompted, get to the message base, choose the proper special interest group, see if there are any new messages for me, and if there are, read them. At this point I log-off and turn off Interlink's Recorder.

Thereafter, whenever I want to call that BBS to check for new messages, all I have to do is start the recording. Interlink will handle everything automatically - from dialing, to getting the messages to hanging up. In fact, you can even set a clock and have Interlink run the recording at a later time. This permits the automatic calling of a system even when you're away from your computer.

Since you give each recording a name (and since they're stored on a floppy or a hard drive) you can make as many recordings as you want. Thus you can have different recordings for different BBS's and for different tasks within a given BBS. For instance, you can have one recording that checks for and captures new messages on a BBS, and another that checks for recent public domain programs to download.

A MINI BBS

Another of Interlink's novel features turns your ST into a mini BBS. This function is called Answer Mode, and it permits remote access to your ST from another computer. It even provides for three remote access levels, each with their own passwords.

There's the low access level which only allows the remote caller to leave messages and download or upload files (via xmodem) from a specified folder in your ST. The medium level allows access to everything except the file delete and message read capabilities. Finally, the high access level allows the remote caller to perform all the TOS functions, including copy, rename, delete, download, upload, show info, and printing to the screen.

FILE TRANSFER

Interlink supports a number of methods of file transfer, including XMODEM, YMODEM and ASCII. A forth method, merely called "????", allows you to load external transfer drivers from a floppy, such as a Kermit driver that's now being worked on. A number of Emulation modes are provided for, including VT52, VT100, and a user definable translation.

When the Chimes feature is turned on, a pleasant set of tones is heard the moment you are connected. And if you have a monochrome monitor you can choose between having 48 or 24 lines of text displayed on the screen.

Additionally, Interlink allows you to perform, from within the program, the standard TOS desktop functions. You can create a folder; rename, copy, delete, show or print a file; as well as format a disk. In fact, in addition to the conventional formatting, you can perform a nonstandard 400K per side formatting.

IS THERE ANY BAD NEWS?

So far Interlink sounds great. Now let's talk about its possible shortcomings. I think the best way to do this is to compare it with Flash, which is possibly the most popular tel-com program for the ST.

One of the nice features of Flash is that you can perform any of its 71 functions right from the keyboard, without leaving it's on-line screen. This means that your view of the incoming data isn't interrupted, and you can immediately see the consequences of changing, say, the baud rate or the parity.

Contrasted with this, when changing one of Interlink's parameters, a window pops up, and you have to use the mouse to click on buttons. Unfortunately, the windows block out the incoming data. Additionally, having to use the mouse slows you down, as far as I am concerned. However you're probably not going to be changing parameters very often, given the program's advanced auto-dialing and recording features.

And then there are the function keys. Admittedly, Interlink allows the creation of 20 programmable function keys, through the use of Alt and Control keys. Basically, however, these keys are merely for sending strings of characters. Contrasted with this, FLASH's function key capability is almost unlimited, since a function key string can contain any of the program's 71 commands. In other words, FLASH's function keys can be programmed to do anything, whereas Interlink's function keys have relatively limited applications. In spite of this, Interlink's automated features probably make it the better program for most users.

Interlink is not copy protected, and the 48 page manual is quite good. It has an index, and it's explanations are

logically laid out. The program works on a 520, 1040, mono and color systems, but requires TOS in ROM. Finally, in addition to having a customer support telephone line (813-923-8774), Intersect Software maintains a BBS that contains a customer support section (813-924-4590)

This is a feature packed program which is very easy to use. No wonder Interlink ST is gaining such a following.

Since Ralph Turner received his version (1.0) of the program there have been several revisions. The current version of Interlink ST is 1.7 and many new features have been added. One of the new features is the ability to run recordings from the Function keys as well as the answer line of the autolog, this allows access to all 114+ commands available in Interlink from the function keys. Interlink has been fully tested on the Mega ST, upgraded 520ST and 1040ST.

The new Atari SX212 300/1200 baud Hayes compatible modem works right out of the box (no changes to the default settings required). Just plug it in, load Interlink ST and you are ready to go!

B.A.A.U.G. ELECTIONS

This is just a reminder that the yearly B.A.A.U.G. elections are scheduled for the December meeting, Monday December 7th. If you or someone you know is interested in any of the officer positions, just give the name of the interested party to any of the current B.A.A.U.G. officers. They'll be happy to put your name on the ballot.

Any position is open, and none take a great deal of time. They do require that you be present for two meetings a month, the General Meeting which is the first Monday of the month from 7:00 PM until 9:45 PM, and the Board Meeting which is generally held the following Monday from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM. The Board meeting is essentially the planning meeting for each month's activities.

No experience is necessary, and you can gain experience in group organizations and make some new friends along the way. Why not help out YOUR GROUP?

ELECTIONS:

DECEMBER MEETING !!!

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PRESS RELEASE

**COMPUTER SUPERMARKET SHOW AND
SALE NOVEMBER 28 & 29, 1987**

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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The COMPUTER SUPERMARKET Show and Sale is a two-day personal computer show where thousands of new products will be available for immediate purchase by show attendees.

Retailers, manufacturers and distributors will offer outstanding savings on a wide variety of hardware and software products for business, education, entertainment and home use. Accessories, supplies, peripherals and complete personal computer systems representing hundreds of brand names will be available to shoppers at discount prices.

The COMPUTER SUPERMARKET Show and Sale will be open for two days at Brooks Hall in San Francisco, California on Saturday and Sunday, November 28 & 29, 1987. Show hours are from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Saturday and 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Sunday. Admission is \$7.50 and children under 12 are free.

For exhibitor and show information, call or write MICROSHOWS, 1209 Donnelly Avenue, Suite 203, Burlingame, CA 94010. Telephone (415) 340-9113, in CA 800-433-7469.

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PRESS RELEASE

**BAY AREA COMPUTER SWAP
DECEMBER 05, 1987**

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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The BAY AREA COMPUTER SWAP is a one-day personal computer swap met where thousands of new products will be available for immediate purchase by show attendees.

Retailers, manufacturers and distributors will offer outstanding savings on a wide variety of hardware and software products for business, education, entertainment and home use. Accessories, supplies, peripherals and complete personal computer systems representing hundreds of brand names will be available to shoppers at discount prices.

The BAY AREA COMPUTER SWAP will be open for one day at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, California on Saturday, December 05, 1987. Show hours are from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Admission is \$5.00 and children under 12 are free.

For exhibitor and show information, call or write MICROSHOWS, 1209 Donnelly Avenue, Suite 203, Burlingame, CA 94010. Telephone (415) 340-9113, in CA 800-433-7469.

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PRESS RELEASE

**COMPUTER SUPERMARKET SHOW AND
SALE DECEMBER 12 AND 13, 1987**

**SANTA CLARA CONVENTION CENTER,
SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA**

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The COMPUTER SUPERMARKET Show and Sale is a two-day personal computer show where thousands of new products will be available for immediate purchase by show attendees.

Retailers, manufacturers and distributors will offer outstanding savings on a wide variety of hardware and software products for business, education, entertainment and home use. Accessories, supplies, peripherals and complete personal computer systems representing hundreds of brand names will be available to shoppers at discount prices.

The COMPUTER SUPERMARKET Show and Sale will be open for two days at Brooks Hall in Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, California on Saturday and Sunday, December 12th & 13th, 1987. Show hours are from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Saturday and 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Sunday. Admission is \$6.00 and children under 12 are free.

For exhibitor and show information, call or write MICROSHOWS, 1209 Donnelly Avenue, Suite 203, Burlingame, CA 94010. Telephone (415) 340-9113, in CA 800-433-7469.

USING THE GE MAIL SYSTEM (Downloaded from GENIE)

E Mail is a very powerful Electronic Mail system, but it can also be quite easy to use, once you know how.

The easiest way to Read and Send your Electronic Mail on GENie is to just type either READ or SEND at the Atari Roundtable Menu prompt.

Reading mail is simple, just type R at the menu prompt, and any Mail you have waiting will be displayed. Be SURE that your Capture Buffer is turned on BEFORE you type R if you want to save the mail to your disk, or print it out. Use CTRL S to pause the display, and CTRL Q to restart it if you like.

Once you READ a letter, it is marked for deletion, and can't be re-read again by typing R. If the Mail scrolls by too fast for you to read, or you forget to Capture it, there **is** a way to re-read it however. More on that later.

To SEND mail, type S and wait for the system to respond with a brief message, and then a To: prompt.

Type in the GE Mail Address of the person you want to send Mail to. The name MUST be spelled correctly, including any punctuation. For example, MARTY A will send mail to a different person than MARTY.A

be careful! If you don't know, or have forgotten someone's GE Mail address (username), you can use the Search Addresses function #5 on the GE Mail Menu. Enter a 'Search String' which contains the name, or part of the name you want to Search for.

For example, if you know the person's name is Johnson, enter that for the Search String. GENie will then print out all the names and Mail Addresses which contain 'Johnson'. Be aware however that it may take quite a long time to search through all the thousands of GENie members.

Once you have entered the name of the person the letter is TO, you can also send a 'Carbon Copy' to someone else, or even to yourself if you'd like a copy of the letter. Enter the name of the person to receive the copy at the CC: prompt.

Then you can type in the subject of the letter, at the Subject: prompt.

You can skip the CC: and Subject: by just pressing RETURN.

The same letter can be sent or copied to several people

at once, by including their names, separated by commas: To:MARTY.A,DARLAH,BOBR

If you enter the name wrong, GENie may tell you that your entry has been ignored, because it does not know that name. If this happens, press RETURN past the CC: and Subject: prompts, then at the 1> prompt for the first line of the letter, type *W which will Wipe out your input and let you start over at the To: prompt

If you change your mind about sending a letter, press RETURN past the prompts until you get to the 1> prompt, then type *X to Exit.

When you see the 1> prompt, you can begin typing in your letter. All the normal Editing commands are available to you while you are entering the text.

All of the Editing Commands begin with a * and MUST be the first thing on a line. Some of the more useful Editing Commands are:

- *L LISTs your letter, so you can read it over.
- *L,6 LISTs line number 6.
- *L,6-8 LISTs lines 6 through 8.
- *D,6 DELETES line number 6.
- *D,6-8 DELETES lines 6 through 8.
- *R RENUMBERS the lines if you've deleted any.
- *CHAV CHANGES text in a line, to correct mistakes. The way to use this command is like this:

>6This line has a mistake in it.

To correct the above line, enter:

*CHAV,6/mistake/mistake/

Enter the command, *CHAV, then the Line Number, then /

then the OLD TEXT then / then the NEW TEXT then /

Be sure to include the , and all the /s.

- *H Displays the HELP file for the Editing Commands.
- *W WIPES out the letter and lets you start over.
- *X EXITS from the letter WITHOUT sending it.
- *S SENDs the letter.

There are many other, more sophisticated functions of GE Mail which are available through the 'Mail Command Mode'. To use these functions, you must

move to the Mail Menu by typing MAIL at the Roundtable menu prompt, then selecting #6, Mail Command Mode from the Mail menu. You will then see the 'Command?' prompt.

The first thing to do is to create a 'Mail Queue', or list of the mail you have in your mailbox. If you type **DISPLAY ALL** (or **DIS ALL** for short), you will see a numbered list of ALL your mail in the system, including mail you have sent to other people, and mail you may have already read.

You can also choose to create a list of only mail that you have sent to a particular person, or mail from a particular person by typing either: **DISPLAY TO:NAME** or **DISPLAY FROM:NAME** (be careful to observe the spaces).

If you want to see a list of mail before or since a certain date, you can type: **DISPLAY <870801** or **DISPLAY >870801** You can use **DISPLAY =870701** to show mail for one specific date too.

Once you have created this Mail Queue list, you can do several things with it. Probably one of the most useful things is to re-read a letter which scrolled past too quickly when you tried to **READ** it. Find the letter on the Queue list and type: **LIST n** where n is the number of the letter on the list.

Normally Mail is erased from the system, five days after you **READ** or **LIST** it. If you would like to keep a letter active, don't **READ** it, but go into the Mail Command Mode, create the Queue list and use: **SCAN n** which will let you read the letter without marking it as having been 'Read'.

A letter which you have already **READ** or **LISTed** can be saved from being erased by typing **REQUEUE n**

If you change your mind about having sent a GE Mail letter, you can use the Queue list and type: **CANCEL n** to erase it from the system.

To find out if the person you sent a letter to has Read it yet, use **DISPLAY n** with the Queue number: **DISPLAY 8**

While you are in Mail Command Mode, you can send a letter by typing: **ENTER** All the normal Editing Commands can be used.

Note that many of these commands can be combined, or several functions can be carried out with only one command: **DISPLAY TO:NAME >870801** or **CANCEL 2 4 5**

Finally, to leave the Mail Command Mode, type: **EXIT**

For further information on these and other Mail Command Mode functions, type: **HELP** while you are

in Command Mode, or see your GENie manual.

MAIL and MAIL COMMAND MODE Quick Summary

(Note that Mail Commands may be abbreviated to the first three letters)

READ Reads your mail from within the Roundtable.

SEND Sends a letter from within the Roundtable.

DISplay **DISPLAYs** a Queue, or list of your Mail.

DIS ALL shows ALL letters.

DIS TO:NAME shows letters to a person.

DIS FROM:NAME shows letters from a person.

DIS <870801 shows letters before a date.

DIS >870801 shows letters after a date.

DIS =870801 shows letters on a specific date.

DIS # shows the status of a letter from the queue list.

LISt Reads a letter, and marks it to be erased in 5 days.

SCAN Shows a letter without marking it to be erased.

REQueue Reclaims a letter already marked to be erased.

CANcel Removes a letter you sent from the system.

ENTER Allows you to send mail from the Command Mode.

EXIt Leaves Mail Command Mode.

***L** Lists your letter, or lines or a range of lines.

***D** Deletes lines, or a range of lines.

***R** Renumbers the lines.

***CHAV** Changes text to correct mistakes.

***H** Displays the Editing **HELP**.

***W** Wipes out the letter to start again.

***X** Exits without sending the letter.

***S** Sends the letter.

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TOS ROMS ... BLITTER VERSION

Atari Corp.

The new revision of TOS has been upgraded to include support for the hardware blit as well as retaining the software blit functions for full compatibility with older software which relies on hardware timing. Changes in the new ROMs are:

RS232: The RS232 handler has been completely rewritten. RTS/CTS handshaking now works. Baud rates 50 and 75 now work.

CLOCK: Support is now included for the Mega ST's built-in, battery-backer-up realtime clock. The realtime clock is automatically used by the XBIOS gettime and settime functions for the IKBD. The GEMDOS clock is reset from the realtime clock at the termination of every program.

STARTUP: Memory clear at system startup is much faster, improving performance on multi-megabyte systems.

DESKTOP: The desktop now includes a control for deactivating/activating the blitter chip. Also, the Save Desktop and Print Screen selections will request confirmation. Suprious characters are no longer written to the DESKTOP.INF file. Doing a PRINT or SHOW from the desktop will now display characters with ASCII codes above 127. SHOW and PRINT use a larger buffer now. Single drive copies now require fewer disk swaps.

CART: Cartridge handling has been revised, eliminating the need for "CARTSTART" code and allowing .TOS and .TTP programs. Lower case letters will now be accepted and passed to an application from the "Open Application ... Parameter" box.

AES: The AES will now send repeat clicks if the mouse button is held down on the arrow or page controls of a window, which lets a window smooth scroll. The AES underscore bug is now fixed. APPL_TPLAY and APPL_TRECORD now work. The limit of 30 characters on a line in an alert box is now rigidly enforced.

MOUSE: The mouse redraw can now be set to XOR mode. The system will return after a single click if this is what was requested.

A: The DMA bus can now have more than one device attached at powerup time, without any special software.

FLOPPY: The floppy read/write code checks for more errors now. In prior versions, the system would not report a CRC error under certain circumstances; now it will. this hurts some copy protection schemes. The format of the floppy disk has been skewed from track to track to improve disk speed; the XBIOS supports this by using -1 for the skew value and placing a pointer to a one word per sector skew table in the previously unused longword.

BIOS: Character out routines are much faster.

BLITTER: Automatic blitter chip support is included in line-A and VDI calls. The extended inquire will report a larger performance factor than before, allowing applications to check for the presence of the blitter. A new XBIOS call has been added to check for the blitter and to activate or deactivate it. The blit is not reentrant ---line-A and VDI should not be called from within an interrupt.

REGISTER: The registers D0, D1, D2, A0, A1, A2 have always been forfeit when a trap call was made. Now the demise of these occurs under more conditions than before.

MEMORY: Slightly more RAM is used by the system. Programs that were close to the edge on a 520ST may no longer fit.

VARIABLE: Most undocumented system variables have been moved. You were warned!

NOTES AND WARNINGS

1. Some programs depend on the OS always being at \$FC0000. This is "not" cast in stone and will probably change soon. To find the OS header, use the pointer "sysbase" as documented.
2. The 4 megabyte ST puts the screen near the end of accesible RAM. Sloppy programs that have been writing past the end of the screen will give bus errors if they do so on the 4 meg ST.

Reprinted from the MVACE October 1987 newsletter.

HOT-LINE / HELP-LINE

Gordon Anderson (408) 247-4794 Eves. New Users Group/SIG

Richard Anderson (408) 281-8139 Eves. 7-10 Ques. ranging from Telecommunications to Letter, Data & Spell Perfect. Geneology SIG.

Loretta Colbourn (408) 972-4456 General questions.

Bruce Coleman (408) 288-7376 Eves 8-11 except Thurs. 8-bit General Use, BASIC, BASIC XL

John Crane (408) 268-7317 days, 447-6804 eves. general computer questions, BASIC & FORTH.

Gary Furr (mail only) P.O.Box 1073, Mountain View, CA 94042-1073; questions on Atariwriter & printer drivers.

Rich Lewis (408) 985-0251 Eve. 6-9 BASIC, Atari Desktop, Atariwriter, ACTION, 8-bit general.

Gene McCreary (408) 629-7494 eves. 8-9:30, general computer use. BASIC, ASSEMBLY.

Mike Morrow (415) 570-7478 Personal Pascal for ST
Steve Quigley (408) 297-4790 eves. 8-Bit Beginners and Educational Software, general questions.

Bill Richerson (408) 446-2242 Speedscript, BASIC, ASSEMBLY, 825 & 1020 Printers, Electronics Projects/parts & help.

John Schreier (408) 281-8930 eves. 6-9 ST questions.

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